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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9923
INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS OTTAWA 000779

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BEGINS MEETING CANADIAN LEADERS

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Since presentation of credentials on October 2, Ambassador has actively engaged top Canadian political leaders, including the Prime Minister, to underscore the central importance of this highly successful bilateral relationship. He will begin a series of provincial travels on October 6. End Summary.

¶2. (U) In a ceremony at Rideau Hall on October 2, Ambassador Jacobson formally presented his credentials to Governor General Michaëlle Jean, along with new Ambassadors from Azerbaijan and Norway and the new Head of Delegation of the European Commission. In her remarks, the Governor General praised the close and highly successful relationship between Canada and the U.S., built on shared values and cultures as well as trade and people-to-people contacts. She underscored that "we build things together." There was extensive and unusual television coverage of the event and the Governor General's remarks -- which, officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International (DFAIT) Trade noted, she personally re-wrote -- as well as the Ambassador's brief press conference afterward.

¶3. (SBU) Prime Minister Stephen Harper received the Ambassador within two hours of the ceremony at Rideau Hall in his official office opposite Parliament Hill for a 30 minute meeting, joined by his chief of staff and senior foreign and defense policy advisor. There was a brief photo opportunity, which received widespread coverage in the Canadian media. The PM noted that his government had moved the relationship to the strategic level and avoided allowing the irritants to dominate. He commented that President Obama's huge popularity with Canadians makes it easier for Canada to work with the United States. On "Buy America," PM Harper said the government is very upset at the recent CBC reports and has no idea who talked to CBC or whether the CBC reporter simply made the story up. PM Harper and the Ambassador agreed that the issue had a greater political impact than economic. PM Harper said he would very much welcome having the President or First Lady attend the Winter Olympics, while acknowledging that it is for the U.S. Olympic Committee officially to invite the President. PM Harper discussed in some detail climate change issues and the upcoming Copenhagen summit. He said he wants to coordinate policies closely with the U.S. and that he is anxious for Canada to be part of the U.S. debate over climate change and energy security (and equally anxious not to be part of the health care debate).

¶4. (SBU) In back-to-back meetings at DFAIT on October 5, the Ambassador called on Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon and International Trade Minister Stockwell Day. FM Cannon described bilateral relations as "very warm, friendly, and very productive," while underscoring that, with the new Administration, the "U.S. had changed the checkerboard," enabling all to view the world from a different perspective. He praised Secretary Clinton and cited the high respect with

which she is held by her counterparts. He encouraged the Secretary to visit Ottawa soon, hopefully by the end of this year. He welcomed the Ambassador's plans to travel extensively throughout Canada during his first months. FM Cannon raised the Arctic, noting that the subject had also come up during PM Harper's recent meeting with the President, and cited the Beaufort Sea as an issue to settle as soon as possible. The Ambassador emphasized his willingness to facilitate discussions and encouraged the FM to contact him at any time. The FM and Ambassador expressed satisfaction over the new architecture for the G-8 and G-20. The FM also reiterated PM Harper's remarks that U.S. security was as important to Canadians as to Americans, and promised that "whenever the U.S. is attacked, Canada is attacked." The Ambassador praised Canadian support for the U.S. as well as its many services and sacrifices, which he described as "critically important." In a separate meeting, Minister Day noted the close working relationship that he has with USTR Kirk. The Ambassador emphasized his desire to work together with Canada to resolve or lessen some of the trade irritants that are a part of our much broader bilateral partnership. Day focused briefly on the "Buy America" controversy and noted that he was responsible for persuading the Canadian municipalities to suspend their planned retaliatory actions. Day noted that there had been progress in last week's discussions between USTR and Canadian officials. The Ambassador asked Day and his deputies if legislation will be necessary for the provinces and municipalities actually to join the WTO Government Procurement Agreement. The response was that the need for legislation would vary by province, but that all municipalities, under Canadian law, were bound by provincial authority.

¶5. (SBU) Also on October 5, the Ambassador met with Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan in his office on Parliament Hill. The Ambassador emphasized, and Minister Van Loan concurred, that achieving trade and security is important to both governments. Van Loan made clear that he does not view this as a zero sum game, stating that he was looking for a legal option that would allow Canada to share information with the U.S. to meet the requirements for Secure Flight. He said that investing in a separate but equal system would not make financial sense, and that it would be unlikely to meet U.S. standards, anyway. The Ambassador assured Minister Van Loan that he likes to find workable solutions ("conclude deals," in lawyer-speak) whenever possible. Van Loan raised Canada's strong desire for a unique shared port of entry on U.S. soil to replace Canada's Cornwall Island crossing on Akwesasne Mohawk territory that has been closed since June 2009. Van Loan acknowledged that this was a "big ask" and that he and DHS Secretary Napolitano would be discussing it again in November. Van Loan also briefly raised "Buy America," acknowledging that it had been blown out of proportion. He nonetheless encouraged the Ambassador to do all that he could to put the issue to rest, commenting that this would be how the Canadian public would measure his first year in Ottawa.

¶6. (SBU) The Ambassador later met on October 5 with Defence Minister Peter MacKay in his Parliamentary office. The Minister and the Ambassador each spoke of the exceptional relationship between the U.S. and Canadian militaries, calling it the "closest in the world." With regard to Afghanistan, Minister MacKay acknowledged that Canada will be wrestling with its role, in part based on decisions made by NATO allies and the U.S. He pointed to the "enablers" made available by the U.S. to the Canadian Forces in Kandahar, saying that this married-up approach helped make the Canadian commitment possible. The Ambassador recognized the sacrifice and bravery of the Canadian Forces and lamented that some unnamed NATO allies have not "stepped up" as Canada has. He also expressed a desire to visit U.S. and Canadian Forces in Kandahar in order to gain a greater understanding of the circumstances on the ground. The Minister pointed to a major security conference that Canada will host in Nova Scotia in November, and expressed the hope of using the occasion to showcase our close bilateral cooperation, notably, the "significant" responsibilities that the U.S. and Canada share

with regard to the security of North America. MacKay indicated some dissatisfaction that European allies sometimes overlook Canada's significant security contributions, both throughout the world and in the "home game" of North America.

17. (SBU) The Ambassador will be in Montreal and Quebec City October 6-8 to meet with provincial leaders and business people, and will then travel to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba October 12-20, before returning to Montreal October 20-21 for the Canadian American Business Council meeting.

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